



June 28, 2022

## SHELLEY FRALIC AWARD NOMINATION LETTER

Nominee: *Cynthia Ramsay*

It is with ardour and delight that we hasten to jointly nominate one of the most irreplaceable, dedicated and under-celebrated members of the British Columbia media community, Cynthia Ramsay, for recognition as an exemplary journalist and an independent newspaper publisher.

We feel confident that Shelley Fralic would herself concur: Those who don't first and foremost seek the limelight, or pander to trends, but instead proceed with an unerring instinct to serve the public interest, are all too often unrecognized as "name" journalists but instead leave behind a body of work that is astonishingly large, consistently readable and virtuously devoid of self-centredness.

Cynthia has stepped into the breach and maintained the community-enhancing standards of an independent publication dating back to 1930—and she has persevered during Covid to maintain the *Jewish Independent* as a non-virtual product at a time when so many other print newspapers have floundered. You can only accomplish this tenacious endurance by continuing to produce a community newspaper that is deeply-needed, appreciated and very smartly edited.

Anyone in British Columbia old enough to recognize the names Ma Murray or Gwen Cash would understand what it takes to succeed in a competitive profession dominated by men. In a seemingly new era dominated by click bait and cell phones, in which there are as many female students in our universities as male students, it's easy to assume gender parity has been achieved—but, again, Shelley Fralic would appreciate the invisible odds. How many independent community newspapers in British Columbia are now solely-owned, -operated and -published by a woman?

Cynthia is not some Joannie-come-lately. She was part of a consortium that took over the *Jewish Independent* in 1999. She remains friends with the original co-owners. She has never shied away from controversial issues and her paper has been the recipient of multiple awards in a number of categories, including a Webster Award for an article on a local cemetery that had misplaced bodies. For most of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, she has worked seven-days-a-week as publisher, writer, editor (including management and payment of freelance writers), and also assisted with proofreading, graphic design, sales, accounting, subscriptions, IT, HR (including payroll), PR, website content, social media (supervisor and contributor) and even courier (to several depot locations).

Cynthia listens. She takes criticism. She troubleshoots. And she has gained the trust of her readers. Whereas the national Jewish newspaper had to shutter and reopen twice, her *Jewish Independent* has remained in continuous operation for 92 years and counting. Despite not being able to give tax receipts, donations now comprise 6% of her paper's revenues — up from 0% a handful of years ago.

Cynthia Ramsay is a heroic, talented, trusted, beloved and absolutely essential member of the journalistic ferment in B.C. that keeps us from being completely over-powered by media feeds from beyond our own province.

We trust you will recognize her invaluable contributions by conferring the prestigious Fralic Award upon her.

Alan Twigg, C.M., D.Litt. & Yosef Wosk, O.C., O.B.C., Ph.D.